

THE REFORMER.

VOL. V. PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER 1, 1824. [No. 57.]

Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth. Jeremiah v. 1.

ESTABLISHED CLERGY OF ENGLAND.

Extracts from "*The Black Book; or, Corruption Unmasked.*"

[Continued from page 176.]

"Twenty-six bishops, 700 dignitaries, and about 400 non-resident incumbents, enjoy nearly the whole ecclesiastical revenues, amounting to betwixt 5 and 6,000,000 pounds, and averaging about 5000 pounds [22,222 dollars] a year each.

"And for what service? what duties do they perform? what benefit do the people derive from their labours? The bishops ordain the priests; sometimes visit their dioceses; sometimes preach; and this we believe is the extent of their performances, and which, in our opinion, amounts to nearly nothing. Then, as to the dignitaries, they perform still less. Let any one visit the cathedral or collegiate churches; go into St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, or Yorkminster, for instance; and see what is doing in these places. No service is performed which interests the public. Persons may be found admiring the stone and mortar; but the vicars choral, the priest-vicars, the chanters, or sub-chanters, or fifth or sixth canons, are very little regarded; and as to the dignitaries themselves, why they are never to be seen: many of them probably reside some hundred miles off, in more pleasant parts of the country, enjoying the amusements of the chase, or whiling away their time at card-tables, or watering places. Then, as to the non-resident incumbents, it must be admitted, at least, they are *sinecurists*, whose duty is performed, and for which they receive the salary, by deputy. Thus, it appears, that these three classes, without performing any duties, absorb almost the entire revenue of the church. The only labouring bees in the establishment, are the curates, who receive a very small portion of its emolu-

ments. In a parliamentary paper, ordered to be printed on the 16th May, 1817, containing the diocesan returns relative to the number and stipends of curates, we find that for the year 1814, out of 4405 individuals of that class, there were 1657 with incomes only betwixt 40*l.* and 60*l.* per annum. Supposing their average income 100*l.* which is higher than the bishops, by the 36th of George III. had authority to raise them, their share of the revenue of the church only amounts to 440,500*l.* Yet it is this class which performs nearly the whole service of the established church.

“The clergy of the Established Church in Ireland consists of 4 archbishops, 18 bishops, 300 dignitaries, and about 1200 parochial incumbents. Their revenues, from the prodigious extension of tillage within the last thirty years, have augmented enormously.

“The present value of the estates belonging to the bishoprics, if they were now out of lease, would be immense. Mr. Wakefield, from the estimate of well-informed persons, has given the value of a few as follows:—The Primacy, 140,000*l.*; Derry, 120,000*l.*; Kilmore, 100,000*l.*; Waterford, 70,000*l.*; Clogher, 100,000*l.*—Vol. ii. p. 470.

“The livings in the gift of the Archbishop of Cashel are worth 35,000*l.* per annum; those in the gift of the Bishop of Cloyne, 50,000*l.*; of Cork, 30,000*l.*; and of Fern, 30,000*l.* Killaloe has 109 benefices, many worth 1500*l.* per annum. In the Bishopric of Cloyne one living is worth 3000*l.* one worth 2000*l.* and three worth 1500*l.* each. The Deanery of Down, in the year 1790, was worth only 2000*l.* per annum; it now lets for 3700*l.* The Rectory of Middleton, in the county of Cork, in 1785, yielded scarcely 800*l.* per annum; at present it produces upwards of 2800*l.* ‘A living of 500*l.*’ says Mr. Wakefield, ‘is but a middling one in Ireland, and any thing beneath it is considered very low.’

“Notwithstanding these enormous revenues, a large proportion of the bishops, dignitaries, and incumbents, are absentees, expending the immense incomes wrung from the soil and labour of Ireland, in the dissipated and fashionable circles of Bath and London. The families of many of the prelates reside constantly in England, and the only duty performed by the absentee bishop is to cross the water during the summer months, just take a look at the metropoli-

tan palace, and then return to spend the remainder of the year in this country. Mr. Ensor, in his work on Ecclesiastical Establishments, says, 'The Primate of all Ireland, though in the summer of 1807 he enforced the duty of residence to his clergy, almost immediately after his charge quitted the island.' The late Earl of Bristol, Bishop of Derry, resided twenty years abroad; and during that time received the revenue of his rich diocese, amounting to 240,000*l.* The great primate, Rokeby, resided several years at Bath, and never visited Ireland. Many of the prelates, it appears, are young men, indebted for their valuable dignities solely to family connexion. But what is more extraordinary, some have been in the army and navy, and apparently not intended for the Church. 'One archbishop,' says Mr. Wakefield, 'was, I believe, before his appointment, a *lieutenant in the navy*; the Dean of Clogher was a member of the Imperial Parliament; and the rector of a valuable benefice was lately an *aid-de-camp at the Castle*.'—Vol. ii. p. 476.

"The tithes by which this spiritual sinecurism is supported, are levied almost entirely on the cattle, pigs, poultry, and potatoes of the Irish cotters. In England, where, in many parts, a man cannot cut a cabbage, pull a carrot, or gather a bunch of grapes, without giving notice to the spiritual locust, the system is sufficiently intolerable; but in Ireland, from the mode of collecting tithes, those evils are aggravated tenfold. The Irish clergy generally employ an agent, called a Proctor, who, immediately before harvest, estimates the barrels of corn, tons of hay, or hundred weight of potatoes, he supposes on the ground, and charging the market price, ascertains the amount to be paid by the owner. The Parson sometimes leases the tithes out to the Proctor, at a fixed rent, like a farm; while the latter, who, in that case, is called the middle Proctor, not unfrequently re-lets them to another. In the south, Mr. Wakefield says, the tithe is set out and sold by public auction on the premises. And in Connaught, the same writer found it was customary to call a sale before the harvest, at which the tithe is sold to any person who chooses to collect it.

"Under such a system, it is easy to conceive what the Irish must endure. From the Proctors and middle Proctors,

they cannot expect either lenity or indulgence. These men, probably strangers in the parish, have no motives for cultivating the friendship of the people; and having farmed the tithe for a stipulated sum, it is to be expected they will collect it with the utmost rigour, in order to realize the greatest profit from their bargain. The most distressing scenes are sometimes witnessed from their relentless proceedings. The half-famished cotter, surrounded by a wretched family, clamorous for food, frequently beholds his favourite cow, or the tenth part of the produce of his potatoe garden, carried off to fill the insatiable maw of clerical rapacity. 'I have seen,' says Mr. Wakefield, 'the cow, the favourite cow, driven away, accompanied by the sighs, the tears, and the imprecations of a whole family, who were paddling after, through wet and dirt, to take their last affectionate farewell of this their only benefactor at the pound gate. I have heard, with emotions which I can scarcely describe, deep curses repeated from village to village, as the cavalcade proceeded. I have witnessed the group pass the domain walls of the opulent grazier, whose numerous herds were cropping the most luxuriant pastures, whilst he was secure from any demand for the tithe of their food, looking on with the utmost indifference.'—Vol. ii. p. 466.

"To spare the rich and plunder the poor, is certainly not Christianity; it is more like Church of Englandism, which, by the monstrous union of Church and State, has perverted the pure, simple, and charitable faith of Christ into a tremendous engine of political guilt and spiritual extortion. There is, we are assured, plenty of law in Ireland, as well as in this country: there is no wrong, we are told, without a remedy there; the Courts of Justice are open, as the hypocrites say in England, for the punishment of either magisterial or clerical delinquents. All this sounds well on paper, in a Regent's speech, or in a speech of Castlereagh; but it is mere mockery and insult when offered to the victims of legal violence. Law, in both countries, is for those who can pay for it—the rich and not the poor. The poor cotter, oppressed or defrauded by the exaction of the tithe Proctor, to the value of 10*l.* cannot buy a chance of redress in the lottery of the law for less than 60*l.* By victory or defeat he is equally and irremediably ruined. What resource then

have men whose possessions probably do not amount to half that sum? None. The way to Courts of Justice, through the impassible barrier of attorneys and lawyers' fees, is over a bridge of gold; and to point out these tribunals for redress either to English or Irish poor, or even to those moderately endowed with this world's wealth, is, in other words, to point out to a man the shortest way by which he may bring himself to the jail, and his family to the workhouse.

"The situation of the London clergy is different from that of the clergy in other parts of the kingdom. In the reign of Henry VIII. continual quarrels were carried on between the citizens and the clergy, relative to their tithes, fees, and other emoluments. To put an end to these disorders, the Act of the 37th Henry VIII. established a commission, with full power to give to their decisions the force of law, if they were enrolled in the Court of Chancery before the first of March, 1545. The same act made their decisions a dead letter if they were not enrolled in the specified manner. Somehow it happened the enrolment never took place; consequently, the decree of the commissioners never was in force. The clergy of the metropolis, however, found their claim for 2s. 9d. in the pound on this decree. The London *Fire-Act Clergy*, with all the impudence imaginable, commenced their petition of last February, with the following allegation:—'That before the fire of London, in 1666, the incumbents of livings in the city, and the liberties thereof, were entitled, under a decree of commissioners made pursuant to the 37th Henry VIII. to payment, in lieu of tithes, at the rate of 2s. 9d. in the pound on the rents of the houses, shops, warehouses, and other buildings in their respective parishes'

"This is what the London clergy modestly term their '*ancient rights*.' These '*ancient rights*,' however, have no foundation; the decree on which it is pretended they are founded, never having been enrolled. Two shillings and nine pence in the pound no doubt would yield a very handsome revenue; and the clergy have looked to this claim with extreme longing, and beheld the increasing wealth and population of the city, with feelings something similar to those ascribed by Milton to Satan, when contemplating, with malignant eye, the happiness of our first parents in the garden of

Eden. An assessment of 1*s.* in the pound, as stated by the City Tithe Committee, would, in the smallest and poorest parishes, yield an income of 500*l.* a year, and an assessment of 2*s.* 9*d.* would raise the lowest living to 1400*l.* a year.

“Though the decree emanating from the 37th Henry VIII. had never any validity, it has formed the principle on which the assessment has been raised for the maintenance of the metropolitan clergy. The clergy, indeed, in no instance exact the 2*s.* 9*d.* but generally content themselves with 2*s.* 1*s.* 9*d.* or 1*s.*—or, in short, any thing they can obtain; insisting, however, at the same time, on their extreme forbearance in thus generously foregoing their ‘ancient rights,’ which never existed. Even the 37th Henry never intended to vest in the clergy the 2*s.* 9*d.* for their exclusive maintenance, but also for relieving the *poor* and repairing the edifice of the church. This they have always kept out of sight; the parishioners apparently acquiesced in their pretended rights; and it was only owing to the ill-timed rapacity of the *Fire-Act Clergy* which led to the notable discovery, that there was, in fact, no legal provision for the maintenance of the London clergy. Of the proceedings of the *Fire-Act Clergy* and their rapacious claims it may be worth while to give some account.

“After the 37th Henry it appears, without any legal right, the clergy throughout the metropolis were maintained by a certain pound-rate levied on the rental of buildings in their respective parishes. This practice continued till the dreadful fire in 1666 laid the greater part of the city in ashes, burning down or damaging 85 parish churches. After this catastrophe, the legislature enacted that some of the parishes destroyed should be united; that only 51 churches should be rebuilt; and that the ministers of those churches should, in lieu of their former allowance, receive certain fixed sums, levied by an equal pound-rate on the houses. This was the 22d and 23d Charles II. termed the *Fire-Act*. The clergy subject to the provisions of this act appear to have been perfectly satisfied, till the effects of the fire began to disappear, the rents of the houses to rise, and the city to get rich again. Then it was that our reverend gentlemen became discontented: they saw, with grudging eyes, the increasing wealth of the city, of which their fixed stipends

would not allow them to participate; they talked unceasingly of their former pound-rate, of their 'ancient rights,' and at length determined, in good earnest, to apply to parliament.

"In consequence of this application, parliament made valuable additions to their salaries; the lowest incomes were raised to 200*l.* a year, and many of the larger parishes, nearly, if not quite, to 600*l.* a year, exclusive of surplice-fees and other valuable emoluments. This augmentation, to all reasonable men, appeared quite sufficient: not so to the clergy. In 1817 they applied for a further augmentation. This application was refused. In 1818 they came forward a third time, with their famous petition of the 4th February, filled with grievous lamentations about the loss of their 'ancient rights.' The bubble now burst. Parliament, disgusted with the rapacity of these 'sturdy beggars,' determined to refer their petition to a committee. It was soon discovered their 'ancient rights' had no foundation; that they never were entitled to 2*s.* 9*d.* on the rental, or any part of it; that with the 37th Henry VIII. which they had foisted into their petition, they had nothing to do, 'except it were to exhibit the craving and rapacious spirit which actuated them.'

"Various other disclosures were made. Of the thirty-five *poor* clergymen who had signed the petition, none of them, on an average, was receiving less than 500*l.* a year. Twenty-five out of the number were pluralists, and not a few of them the fattest pluralists of the profession. Some of the incumbents received annually 1200*l.* 1500*l.* and even 2000*l.* while they did not pay their curates more than 60*l.* 70*l.* or 80*l.* a year.* Instead of residing in the parsonage-house, among the parishioners, the parsonage-houses of many were let to the merchants and manufacturers for counting-houses and warehouses, for which they received exorbitant rents of

* "The incumbents in London, we are told, are careful to select curates whose abilities are not likely to eclipse their own. Some, it is said, do not stop here, but actually make *personal appearance* an object of consideration, always taking care to choose a curate of a less imposing figure than themselves. Hence many parishes, in order to have a tolerable discourse once on a Sunday, and a decent looking man in the rostrum, go to the expense of paying an evening lecturer of their own choice."

200*l.* or 300*l.* a year. Some of them were canons at St. Paul's, some were precentors, prebendaries, and held other dignified situations in cathedral and collegiate churches.

"Had not the *Fire-Act Clergy* been the most unreasonable and rapacious men breathing, there is little doubt but they would have considered the emoluments arising from these numerous preferments sufficient. But the wealth of India would not satisfy the cravings of this profession. Some of them, it is said, were base enough to lay in wait for the Members going to the House, while their petition was pending, and beseech them to support their claims for an increase in their stipends. It reminds us of the monks of St. Swithin's. These gluttons had thirteen meals a day. Hume relates, that they threw themselves prostrate in the mire before Henry II. and with doleful lamentations complained that the Bishop of Winchester had cut off three meals a day. 'How many has he left?' said the King. 'Ten,' replied the disconsolate monks. 'I myself,' said Henry, 'have only three, and I enjoin the Bishop to reduce you to the same number.'

"The emoluments of the London clergy are far greater than those of the clergy in the country. Some of the livings we know are very valuable. For instance, there is the rectory of St. George's, Hanover-square, held by Dr. Hodgson, and in the gift of the Bishop of London, worth about 4000*l.* per annum. There is the living of St. Botolph, Bishopsgate-street, held by the Rev. Dr. Mant, probably worth 3000*l.* The rectory of St. Andrew's, Holborn, in the gift of the Duke of Buccleugh, and held by the Rev. Mr. Clare, is nearly as valuable. The living of St. Giles's, held by the Right Rev. Bishop of Chichester, is another valuable rectory. We could enumerate others, but these must suffice.

"In considering the incomes of the metropolitan clergy, it must be remembered, that they have many other sources of emolument besides their benefices. St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey have many valuable dignities, equal in value to good fat livings, and which are shared among the London ecclesiastics. Then there are the appointments in the Royal Chapels, public libraries and museums, and the salaries they receive as ushers, masters, &c. in the numerous

and wealthy charitable foundations, and which altogether must make their incomes immense."

For the Reformer.

It was little thought, perhaps, by the most of christians, at the time their doctrines were first promulgated by the apostles, that ever those doctrines would be formally acknowledged by despotic lordlings, for the purpose of gaining, more effectually, an unwarrantable dominion over the ignorance of millions of the human species. Those who then took upon themselves the christian name, were, for the most part, sincere in their professions, and their honest dealing and good conduct soon gained them the confidence of all who became acquainted with them; so that christian principles and professions progressed with an astonishing rapidity. While those who adhered to the doctrine were few in number, those few were persecuted by the men in power with all the barbarity that human ingenuity was capable of devising. But in despite of all these things, they were constantly increasing in numbers and respectability.

At length, when it was found that the christian religion could not be extirpated by "fire and sword," and that it was destined, at no distant period, to become almost general, thousands, without any change of character, proclaimed to the world that they had become converts to the new faith, and thus gained the confidence of the christians. In their pretended zeal for the cause of religion, they built superb edifices, and adorned them with the most costly materials that the globe could produce. These appearances, so well calculated to deceive the ignorant, and to entrap the unwary, soon effected an entire change in the features of christianity. The builders of these "Babels" were adored as saints by thousands of the stupid, superstitious populace; and many, no doubt, who had become converts to the christian religion at the risk of losing every thing else, were bewildered with what they saw, and were too weak to withstand the temptation of wealth, when accompanied with professions of sanctity. The favourable opportunity was seized. The love of splendor was used to lure the wealthy and unprincipled, while the name of christianity was held out to deceive the followers of Jesus. Kings and emperors for a while held

the sceptre of dominion in the churches, while *priests* obeyed their nod, and carried their plans into execution. But the unbounded ambition which has ever marked the course of hireling priests, did not long suffer things to remain in this way. Their artful wiles soon procured the adherence of the people, and their ingenious deceptions and unremitting industry, caused kings and emperors to acknowledge the clerical as the highest power on earth.

Had this but been a stopping place for them, better would have been the condition of mankind. But alas! the fact is otherwise. They had got themselves seated on thrones, and it was necessary then to guard against an overthrow of their authority. To prevent such an occurrence, some dreadful expedient must be resorted to. Crusades seemed best adapted to their purposes, as these gave a chance of making conquest, and enriching the coffers of the "HOLY" order, and likewise served to divert the minds of the people from their mischievous machinations, while the yoke of clerical bondage was more firmly rivetted on their necks. The heart sickens at the thought of the seas of blood that have flowed in what were called the "holy wars;" and all undertaken to gratify a thirst for power, and wealth, and distinction, among the priests. Oh! ambition—thou potent monarch, thou opiate to the conscience—when wilt thou cease from ravaging the fairest portions of the earth, and drinking the blood of their inhabitants.

Heavy church tithes have so long oppressed the people of the European countries, that nearly all who are not bound to the now existing forms of government by some tie of interest, either as holders of offices, or as the pampered menials of petty lordlings, wish a change of administration. And why, it may be asked, is not such a change effected, when the measure is so popular? I answer, for want of unanimity in acting—for want of a knowledge of each other's views, it has, as yet, been out of the power of the people to effect it. An army is at all times kept, for the sole purpose of crushing in embryo any movement having a tendency to concentrate the opinions of dissenters from the policy of the reigning powers. Large collections of persons are never permitted, under the penalty of an indiscriminate massacre by the soldiery. And such is the pitch to which affairs have ar-

rived, that *alliances* and *compacts* are formed between legitimate sovereigns, the more effectually to keep the reigns of government out of the hands of the people. Perhaps more than half the wars of Europe, in the last half century, were waged for the alone purpose of drawing the minds of the people from the subject of a change of government at home. How corrupt must be the fountain, when such is the stream.

We Americans, who have broken asunder the yoke of bondage that the British nation sought to impose upon us, think ourselves happy in comparison with our European brethren; and many of us, doubtless, while reflecting on the subject of our "wholesome laws and equal privileges," are ready to say we are altogether free from clerical domination; and that there is no danger, since we have got so good a constitution, of our ever being oppressed with a corrupt national priesthood. But with respectful deference to the opinions of those who entertain this idea, I would warn my countrymen to be vigilant, and not suffer themselves to slumber at their posts. It is well known that already the clergy, in various parts of the United States, are considerably wealthy—that they have got themselves comfortably established as the teachers, and it may be said, the almost exclusive lawgivers, in colleges and academies, which have been established by law, with large donations of land and money from government—and, in many of these institutions, the teachers mark out a lengthy course of theological reading, which must be regularly studied by every student, before he can graduate. Does not this look a little like laying the foundation for a national clerical superstructure? And then, some of the teachers of these institutions are so well versed in the art of *begging*, that nothing can withstand their importunity. They collect a rare mass of materials about the suffering condition of the heathens, their offering themselves as sacrifices to the idol Juggernaut, and a thousand other such stories, in order to make the most affecting discourse, showing forth the necessity of foreign missions:—then, men must be educated to make ministers, for the purpose of preaching the gospel to them. Such an appeal has a powerful effect towards opening the coffers of the wealthy, and sometimes wrings from the widow her hard earned mite, while hungry

orphans go to bed supperless. I believe it is a thing by no means uncommon for one of these college preceptors to go from home, perhaps into some populous city, on a *begging* expedition.

I have observed, of late, some strange movements among the different sects who hold the Calvinistic tenets. It is not my intention to speak as to the consistency or inconsistency of that doctrine. But it is well known that the Calvinists, in this country, are generally more in favour of giving high salaries to their preachers than other denominations—and of course, those who preach for money find among them situations most congenial to their wishes, and adopt their tenets in preference to others. Their *close shearing*, however, has caused many to abandon them and join some other society. To remedy this inconvenience, the preachers of the several denominations of Calvinists are now using their influence to unite among themselves. And for what? To concentrate their forces, and put down opposition from other quarters, by their formidable appearance. A TENNESSEAN.

For the Reformer.

[Communicated from Providence, Rhode Island.]

Messrs. Editors—It affords me much pleasure to think that there is in existence such a publication as the *Reformer*. Ever since I have become acquainted with spiritual things, I have held sentiments similar to many of those advanced in this publication; and this I believe to be the case with very many sober, humble christians, scattered throughout christendom. I cannot say that I approve of every thing which I have seen in the *Reformer*; nor do I know of any publication or book, excepting the Bible, of which I could fully approve. Still, I like the general tenour of the work, and believe it will be productive of much good: and if a publication somewhat like it could be established in every principal place in the Union, incalculable good would, I think, be the result.

That Christianity is, at present, most grossly corrupted, many sincere and spiritual Christians see and deplore. In this town we have our share in this soul-sickening state of things. One church (one of the orthodox ones too) has in its bosom men who are notorious for profanity! This is

one of that vast combination of churches which is now so active in the promotion of the modern plan for christianizing the world. If they would christianize themselves, and get rid of their abominable pride of life, and pompous religious parade, they would remove a great cause of grief from the minds of all meek and lowly Christians acquainted with them; and the more especially, seeing they pass in the Christian world for orthodox and evangelical.

It was formerly a saying among the Baptists, "Reading no preaching;" but they have got so now, in this place, that they can read their prayers! Yes—the *Baptists* in *Providence, R. I.* do not scruple to read their prayers! At the celebration of Independence, this novel spectacle was exhibited, for the first time here, by a Baptist minister of this town, who was selected to pray on the occasion by the *Military Committee of Arrangements*! This same Baptist minister wears a gown in his pulpit, and, for preaching, *pronounces* a very flowery oration, written at full length. He is, therefore, a tolerable Episcopalian. But if he should take a little trip among his country brethren, he would find disapproving countenances there. But who would have imagined, a few years ago, that the Baptists would ever have come to this? Where is the raiment of camel's hair, and the leathern girdle of John the Baptist? *Ichabod* may with propriety be written upon the walls of their temples.

In one of our heterodox societies, people are taught a new birth of this nature; when the drunkard leaves off drinking, he is, in that, regenerated—and so of every thing else. Now every one that has been born of the spirit, knows that this is not what is meant by being born again; and yet this doctrine is publicly held forth, and many embrace it. O! in what a lamentable case are blind people, when led by such blind guides!

Our singing here, as in other places, is performed by professors and non-professors all together, headlong; and thus people are made to utter solemn lies, singing of their heavenly birth when they never experienced any, and of their love to God when they are at enmity with him. This public sham is a public shame; and why it is suffered to go on in quiet as it does, is inconceivable. It is not my place to judge; but I should dread to be in the place of that minis-

ter who should promote or consent to this abominable outrage upon common sense and the worship of God. And yet this is the universal custom among us—orthodox and heterodox; and it is enough to make the heart of a servant of God ache.

The abomination of having men of the world meddle with the religious affairs of meetings, is here common. O Christianity! O abused Gospel! thou needest not the hateful, polluted embraces of thy enemies. If they withhold their hearts from thee, their money is thy affliction when proffered to thee.

As to the numerous societies of the day, things are here as in other places. Characters of the worst sort and church members mingle together, and talk of restoring the Jews, and of bringing about the Millenium, &c.; and the Reverends, and Honourables, and Rabbies, and Lawyers, and Scribes, (I go no further,) trumpet their wonderful doings in the papers, and get their names upon these rolls of immortality. I see not how these people can teach the world Christianity, seeing they do not appear to understand it themselves. And I should suppose that the members of those societies who are not Christians, would be more consistently employed in healing themselves before undertaking to heal others. It is truly ridiculous that men who know nothing about religion should be zealously engaged in Missionary matters. It seems to me this is the most foolish age that has ever yet been.

So much for the fountain. The streams which flow from it may be expected to be like it. Worldly policy, ambition, and vanity, seem to be the governing principles throughout. Young men are sent to college to get qualified to preach! One way to learn to preach with a witness. How edifying must it be to the mind of the young *theologian* to read the obscene and idolatrous Pagan tales of antiquity. How favourable an influence must the wanton legends of yore have upon him. And to see the vanity, lightness, self-importance, and apparent want of devotion of great numbers of those designed for the ministry, is enough to sicken and sadden the heart of every serious, humble Christian.

The foregoing is but a glance at a few things—but it is enough to show us that the Christian world is in a wretched

ed, wretched state. O for the Spirit to come and make searching work among Christians. Instead of being in a prosperous condition, the Christian world is daily getting worse; and there is, at present, scarcely any pure Christianity on the earth; and yet, our *college divines* will come in with their sophistry, and try to make us believe that things are going on finely! Out upon such nonsense, I say—I do not believe that a brown loaf is a leg of mutton. ORION.

For the Reformer.

Mr. Editor—That the course you have adopted since the commencement of the *Reformer*, should meet the animadversions of those whose interest it is to cherish ignorance in the world, was to be expected: however, I trust that no *opposition* will deter you from the philanthropic object which has hitherto been the leading characteristic of your publication.

The greater mass of mankind are buried in the mazes of superstition and ignorance; and it is the interest of a class of men that they should still continue in that state of intellectual degradation. Therefore, revilings and persecutions, in every age of the world, have been liberally bestowed on those who have attempted to unloose the bandage of deception from the eyes of the ignorant, that they might see and judge for themselves. The tapers which are held out to light the midnight storm are assailed by the tempest: and thus, the storms of persecution rage against the light that illuminates the human intellect, and emancipates it from the adamantine shackles of superstition and prejudice.

To effect a reformation in Christendom, and to cleanse *popular religion* of its corruptions, is unquestionable a bold, yet laudable undertaking. There was a time when *popery* held a degrading sway over the religious and political interests of Europe; but in process of time, the moral influence of knowledge overcame the physical force of despotism, and a reformation was effected. Since then new means of deception have been devised; for after the doctrines of the reformation became popular, impostors professed the tenets of the reformers, to ingratiate themselves into popular favour, that they might the more easily carry their corrupt intentions into effect. Of this fact we have abundant proof—we

need only to contrast the professions and practices of the clergy of the present day. What a horrible spectacle of ministerial turpitude is exhibited in their endeavours to impose on the ignorant, that they may increase their own pecuniary interest! And at the same time they profess to be the champions of religious tolerance—thus Judas kissed his Redeemer when in the very act of betraying him. Now, I would ask if these *pretended* disciples of the reformers of old are any better (in a moral point of view) than the followers of the Pope. The only difference is, one carries his corrupt practices into effect by *force*—the other, by *deception*. One bears the same analogy to the other, as the *open noonday robber* to the *sly midnight thief*. Therefore, I conceive there never was a time when a reformation was more necessary than at the present day.

PEREGRINUS.

For the Reformer.

I have read, in some of the religious works of the day, the supposition that the Scribes and Pharisees of old, were probably men whose conduct was circumspect in the eyes of the world, but that they were *probably* guilty of enormous vices in secret; but I see no reason for any such conjecture. They appear to me to have been men of the same character of the most distinguished men among our clergy, and the high professors among our laity. They were probably men who could not in any manner be accused of those crimes which to the world appear atrocious; they appear to have been rigid and scrupulous, even to a nicety, on those points; but it seems they were worldly-minded—fond of grandeur, show, and parade—lovers of money—lovers of pleasure, luxury, and ease: men whose hearts were a prey to all these evil and hell-born dispositions, vanity, pride, avarice, envy, malice, &c. while they wore an exterior of superiour sanctity, and rigidly performed all that round of ceremonies which constituted their worship. They were looking for the coming of our Saviour in a pompous and splendid manner—they expected him to set up a temporal kingdom on earth, and that *they* and *their nation* would be the peculiar subjects of his mission, that they might be aggrandized in the earth. They compassed sea and land to make one proselyte. Popular religionists of the present day exhibit the same character

as is described above. They too, are expecting the day when the pompous religion which they call christianity shall be universally received throughout the earth. They too, compass sea and land to make one proselyte. They preach up the duty of alms-giving, and blazon forth their alms in the newspapers, as the Pharisees blew a trumpet before them when they went out to give alms. They rigidly enforce some small things which they call duty, but which never can effect our salvation; while they neglect to enforce the great duties of self-denial—crucifying the flesh—humility, meekness, temperance, sobriety—love to God and our neighbour. I need say no more. Let the reader himself draw the comparison.

SINCERITUS.

[From the Pilot, printed at New Haven, Con.]

700,000 MINISTERS!!!

The reverend Dr. Griffin, in his strange talk before the Education Society, referred to in the first of these numbers, speaks of one hundred millions of Roman Catholics, as lying in darkness, and going to perdition merely for want of *educated* ministers. The time was, when “to be taught of God” was a requisite qualification; but now, boys are to be gathered from all quarters into the colleges, with the expectation of their being ministers, and with an equal expectation, we hope and trust, that the heavenly dove will descend on them in good season. They are to study for a short season, and then to be sent to France, Spain, Italy, and other popish territories. France will require, according to the Doctor’s scales, 28,000 ministers, and the city of Paris alone, about 800. These are to meet and contend with the Bossuets, the Massilons, and the Saurens of the present day, and to convert the whole catholic world to the protestant faith!!

This single view of the Doctor’s plan shows how wild men will become, when they imagine themselves to be the sovereigns of the christian church, and dispensers of grace and salvation.

In a late New Haven Journal we are told “how to collect money to convert the world.” These are the very words; and we are told, that if every man in christendom would give *a shilling a year for the salvation of the heathen*, the rills of charity would soon fill to overflowing!

The reverend parson Wayland says, with apparent seriousness,—“You may assist in the conversion of the world by your *pecuniary* contributions. An opportunity of this kind will be presented this evening. We pray you to use the mammon of unrighteousness so, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.”

The reverend Mr. Boardman, in his sermon to the Foreign Missionary Society, remarked, that there were six hundred millions of heathen in the world. He further remarked, that a generation passes off the stage once in 30 years, and consequently that there are six hundred millions of immortal souls consigned to eternal perdition every 30 years; that God had given us the power and ability to seal the eternal destiny of six hundred millions of souls; and that giving our *money* would be the means of their salvation, and withholding it would insure their damnation—and that knowing these facts, and possessing the means we do, we anticipate the general judgment, and that by giving or withholding, we, so far as our influence goes, pass the sentence of eternal felicity or woe upon six hundred millions of precious and immortal souls!!

Many other articles of the like import are in our possession, all insisting on *money* as the means of salvation—and doubtless the same language is addressed to individuals who are visited by the hired mendicants of the society.

This is a lamentable state of things—but from the papers published at Philadelphia, Wilmington, Canandaigua, Litchfield, Boston, and elsewhere, we learn with pleasure that our people are beginning to be alarmed on the subject of these societies, as not only dangerous to real religion, and oppressively expensive to the deluded contributors, but as portending evil to our liberties and our political institutions; and we are happy to find, in a late annual report of the Education Society, that there are great arrearages on annual subscriptions, that in the last seven months they have fallen astern 3500 dollars, and that the receipts of the last seven months have been 6000 dollars less than they were in the same seven months of 1816.

From the time of the Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, to the present day, worldly societies have been associated, in every age and country, for purposes like those of the

above societies. All of them have pretended great zeal for a humble religion, which they could not have respected; all have been zealous for *money, money*, and for the prostration of the means and consciences of the people to their purposes; but in a country so full of information as ours, such societies must be of short duration. People who labour as hardly as our people do, will not long endure the exactions which are necessary for the support of such societies. A christian people, who believe that the King of Zion will have the control of his church to the end of the world, will not continue to repose their honest confidence in men who *buy* their directorships and their memberships,—whose rank in the above societies is estimated by the weight of their deposits, and who openly declare that the salvation “of the ends of the earth” depends on the MONIES disbursed for the object.

In the New Testament we read of an apostle to the gentiles, who did not count his *money* before he went on his mission—and we there read of a religion which no proud men ever undertook to propagate. The religion sustained by the three societies alluded to, is a new religion, made up mostly of worldly materials, and in its origin, progress, and every operation, is as variant from the religion of the gospel, as the mind of man can conceive of, in proof of which, we will hereafter offer a short review of their annual reports.

“700,000 MINISTERS!!!”

The writer in the *New Haven Pilot*, under this head, has done justice to his subject, and handled with ability the plans and schemes which the clergy in this country have put in operation to procure funds and establish their influence over the minds and consciences of the community. And indeed it is high time that some such able writers should step forward and attempt to stay the tide which threatens to deluge the land, and ultimately bring us under the same clerical domination, with all its train of abuses, that now prevails in almost every other country in christendom. If measures were to proceed, and continue to be as successful for some time hence as they have a few years back, every thing would have to yield to their force. No man could become President of these United States, congress-man, governor, member of assembly or other representative, unless he was known to be in favour of missionary schemes, theological seminaries, and the support of the priesthood. And when this was the case we might expect to be taxed up to our eyes, and bid

farewell to our rights and liberties, having no longer the privilege to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences.

If the priesthood in this country should once get the people fully in their grasp it will not be an easy matter to obtain deliverance from their power, as the fate of other countries sufficiently shows. It already begins to be sounded forth in sermons, and to be declared in our public prints, that none ought to be elected as rulers but such men as have a "well known respect to religious institutions;" by which is meant such men as will patronise all the various associations got up by the clergy, and who are prepared to reverence and support this order of men in whatever measures they may think proper to adopt. Says a "Rev. D. D." in his late anniversary discourse, (copied into the American Advertiser and other prints, with great applause) "The inhabitants of this country offend God more, and do more to call down his righteous judgments upon them, by the elevation of wicked men to places of power, authority and trust, than the common people of any other country on the globe." The people of Old Spain, France and Italy, are not excepted, because the rulers in those countries pretend great respect to religion, and deal out with a liberal hand the *loaves* and *fishes* to the priesthood. He proceeds: "It is a heaven-provoking sin, when the people of this favoured and privileged land, who have so much to be thankful for, and so much for which to be answerable, by their deliberate votes, entrust the management of public affairs into the hands of the open and avowed enemies of God, who treat him, his cause, and his people, with the utmost contempt:" by refusing to patronise the plans and schemes of the clergy, or to make provision for their support. "*America*," he continues, "*is bound to take a distinguished part in the religious operations of this day of wonders.*"

This same "Reverend Doctor," much in the same stile with some others of his profession, speaks of the good that would result, "if professors of religion, and others who act under a religious influence in all general concerns of importance, would uniformly reject from their suffrage-ticket every candidate of loose principles, and substitute other names to which no such objection could exist. But in order," says he, "to do any thing of this kind with advantage and effect, there must be a union of good men [missionary and priests' men] of all denominations, and a co-operation on subjects essentially vital to the interests of the community. They must lay aside their little prejudices, and act for a great and good and general cause." It would be desirable to know, what this "*great, good and general cause*" aimed at, is. It must certainly be something different from what is supposed now to exist in the government of this country, and we have as yet done very well without it. If inferior religious bodies should unite, to bring about some new project in the affairs of this government, favourable to priestcraft, they would not find their

ends answered, for the stronger parties in rule would in the next place despatch them, and regulate, by statute, their faith and practice, agreeably to what should be deemed orthodoxy.

The inhabitants of this country who have the fate of so many other countries before them, should open their eyes in time, before the clerical fetters preparing are fastened on them. It is true, this thing is so unlooked for, is so concealed, and proceeds in such a silent and gradual manner, that few can believe it has any existence except in the imagination: but those who do see it, and witness its advancement, should not so study their interest or the favour of men, as to withhold a warning voice to our country.*

The influence which the clergy in this country already possess, is greater than is imagined—but is evidenced by the fear and dread most men have of doing or saying any thing to offend them; not from a belief that they are better or more holy than others, but because of the injury they can do them. This is more particularly applicable to a very important class of men in society, on whom our rights and liberties are principally dependant, viz. rulers and editors of papers.

We feel no disposition to awaken up groundless fears, or inspire forebodings of evil; but that we are in danger from the measures now in operation of coming under the domination of a high-minded and mercenary priesthood, is too apparent to those who look at the connexion between causes and effects, and are acquainted with history. So evident indeed is this becoming to some, of late, that a respectable member of the Presbyterian church has suggested to a friend of his as a matter of propriety and expediency, for men of standing and influence in society to meet together and publicly express resolutions of disapprobation against the money-begging system, the missionary mania, the multiplication of theological incorporated establishments, and the strides for power and ascendancy which a corrupt and ambitious priesthood are now making amongst us. If a few men of talents and standing were thus fearlessly to face the monster, *hierarchy*, now rising up, and present an expression of their sentiments in public prints, (the vehicles in which priests are now carrying on their schemes,) with their names affixed, it would

* Admitting that the clergy have no settled design to obtain an ascendancy in the councils of the nation, and become the arbiters of our fate, the operations now going on are calculated to produce such a result. Numerous as they must become, and able to influence the votes of all those who adhere to them, they can and will put such men into office as are suited to their views, and these as a matter of course will make laws in their favour, support their interests, and aid them in their undertakings. Their reign will have then commenced; and having the power they will (as ever has been the case) proceed to greater lengths than even themselves or any of their partisans now anticipate.

perhaps furnish a check, among the great body of the people, to a dangerous influence fast growing up, and prove an antidote to *Lyman Beecher's* famous Address, and other pernicious sentiments disseminated through our country.

The circumstance of such a man as De Witt Clinton rallying on the side of priestcraft and theological seminaries, is sufficient to awaken attention to the danger we are in, and show the advances which are making by the clergy. Perhaps this great statesman has not dared to do otherwise than come under the banners of the priesthood. A few years since, a Presbyterian D. D. of this city publicly advised him, if he would ever fill the chair of the Union, not to wound the feelings of the christian public by giving currency to statements made by *Red Jacket*—letting him know, in the same communication, that there were 1500 ministers of his order in the United States. This was a fair warning, and sufficient to convince him of the danger of showing his opposition to the schemes of the clergy. It appears, indeed, that this intelligent politician has taken the hint, (for we can view his famous Address,* before a body of Presbyterian priests, in favour of training up more priests, in no other light,) and thus one and another of our principal characters bow before the shrine of clerical influence, and thereby add strength to their cause, and render the prospect of their final success less doubtful.

The fear of standing alone has a powerful tendency to keep individuals from presenting their views before the public—and their silence with respect to the proceedings of the clergy, if it does not even sanction, serves to encourage them. If any such meetings as those suggested, were to be announced in our public prints, (are there any editors that would venture to do such a hazardous thing?) we should certainly feel a very strong curiosity to see who, at the meeting, or whether any that expect ever to be elected to a public office, would dare to express their real sentiments: and if not, are we not already brought into subjection, and under vassalage to the priesthood?

Should a few of our noted or principal men step forward and publicly announce before the world their real sentiments concerning some of the operations of the present day, and thereby break the charm and enable the victim to escape the yawning jaws of the monster, they would certainly show themselves to be better patriots, display more true courage, and deserve better of their country, than those who wield the sword and seek to protect our rights and liberties by the slaughter of their fellow beings. The United States being the only country now on the globe where religious rights and free toleration are fully enjoyed, it becomes us to prize the privilege, and to watch against encroachments, however disguised in their operations or plausible in their appearance.

* This singular *document* we shall endeavour to lay before our readers at a future time.

DEISTS IN ENGLAND.

It appears, from a late London paper, that prosecutions are still carried on in England against venders of deistical publications. Two of Carlile's shopmen have lately had their trial—one of whom was sentenced to imprisonment in "his Majesty's gaol of Newgate," for a period of three years, in consequence, it is said, of having aggravated his case by his defence. The following is contained in his defence: "Why do not the pious divines come forward and refute my arguments, instead of filling magisterial offices for which they are unfit? But they prefer their cups and good living. Instead of fair argument, they resort to the arm of power. The present prosecutions will only tend to strengthen and disseminate more widely the principles for which we are prosecuted. Seven trials have already taken place in this Court within the last three days. If the jury find a verdict that shall restore me to my liberty, I will still continue an opponent, but an opponent open to conviction; if they find a verdict consigning me to prison, they will make me a decided and inveterate foe. I am not afraid of a prison."

The cause of so many deists in England will be found in the corrupt bishops and dignitaries of the Established Church, and the abuses and practices among the clergy in that country generally. If all who professed christianity were what they should be, and what their religion requires them to be, there would be no deists in existence.

LONDON CLERGY.

The avaricious cravings of the London Clergy (an account of which is given in our extracts from the "*Black Book*") furnishes a pretty correct specimen of the cravings of the clergy in most other countries. They are never satisfied, never allow that they receive enough. What a curse to any land are such men? what an injury to christianity? The blindness and ignorance of most people in receiving the mercenary priests of this day for the messengers and ministers of Jesus Christ, is as astonishing as it is destructive to the interests of christianity. Christianity will never rise and prosper while such dead weights are appended to it; and they will hang to it as long as they are well paid for it. Stop their salaries and we should soon be rid of them—and the walls of our Theological Seminaries would be vacated, for there would be no more training up for the ministry. Then true religion and piety might make some progress in the world. To turn the propagation of the gospel into a money-making scheme, is an invention for which we are solely indebted to priestcraft, it having no sanction from Christ or his apostles. Till this foul stain on christianity is done away, little good will ever be done among the heathen. It is true, if this money system, as a means of spreading the gospel, was to be abandoned, we might expect all our modern missionaries would desert their posts, and go no more among the heathen—but one such individual as Paul the

apostle would do more good than ten thousand of them, and there would be a vast saving of money to relieve the needy and destitute, the object for which contributions were made in the early days of christianity. How long this disgraceful practice of making the promulgation of the gospel depend upon the *mammon of unrighteousness*, will be kept up or tolerated by the people, it is difficult to say—but sooner or later it will assuredly be brought to naught.

In a debate in the British House of Commons on the Bill for building new Churches, Mr. Hume said he could prove to the conviction of every man, that the fee simple of the revenue of the clergy of the Established Church would sell for \$200,000,000. With such an immense property, was it fair to take money from Dissenters who built their own churches, to build new churches which were not wanted for the establishment?

[*From the American Eagle.*]

The following is the close of a letter to the Editor of this paper, from a gentleman in Middlesex county, *Massachusetts*, on ordering the *Eagle* to be sent to him. He probably alluded to their late *minister* proposal at their late meetings in New York:

“No fact is more thoroughly established throughout Europe than this, that the more numerous their haughty, lazy, aspiring clergy, the more ignorant, wretched, and vicious the mass of the people. The same causes will undoubtedly be productive of similar effects in the United States; therefore I think it a duty to patronise publications that are endeavouring to enlighten the people, and put them on their guard.”

Mr. Frey, again—An Albany paper states, “Frey, ‘the converted Jew,’ lately visited this benighted city.—Mr. Frey says, ‘the Jews do not love money!’ He will probably tell us, next, that he is a christian.” “He also asserted,” says a correspondent, “that there were neither beggars nor thieves among the Jews.—If so, it could not be right to convert them—since we have instances of baptized Jews who turned out to be of both sorts.”

There are said to be now 35,000 priests in France—4000 religious establishments, and 35,500 scholars [preparing for the priesthood] in the seminaries. [Boston Recorder.]

* * * Several articles intended for this number are necessarily delayed till our next.

The Reformer is printed on the first day of each month, at one dollar a year. Letters to be addressed, and payment made to T. R. GATES, Proprietor and principal Editor, No. 290, North Third Street, Philadelphia. Numbers can yet be supplied from the commencement of the work. John Richards, Printer, No. 20, Church Alley.